

**MINUTES  
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING  
TUESDAY, JUNE 23, 2009 AT 5:45 PM\*  
RICHARD E. MASTRANGELO CHAMBER  
ADMINISTRATION BUILDING**

**1. ROLL CALL:** A regular meeting of the Town Council was called to order at 5:45 pm in the Richard E. Mastrangelo Chamber, Administration Building. Present for the meeting were Councilors Stephen P. Corbett, Jonathan Hecht, Angeline B. Kounelis, Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr., Vice President Mark S. Sideris and Council President Clyde L. Younger. Also present were the Town Manager Michael J. Driscoll, Town Attorney Joe Fair and Council Clerk Valerie Papas.

**2. MOTION TO CONVENE EXECUTIVE SESSION\*** Councilor Sideris moved to go into executive session in order to discuss ongoing negotiations, seconded by Councilor Corbett and adopted by unanimous roll call vote.

Councilors Lawn, Falkoff and Devaney were present but arrived after the vote to convene the executive session.

**3. RETURN TO OPEN SESSION – 7:45 PM:**

**4. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**5. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES: June 9th.** Councilor Sideris moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Councilor Piccirilli and adopted by voice vote.

**6. PUBLIC FORUM:**

Carmine Carmonetta, owner of property on Church Lane – spoke in opposition to an increase in water and sewer rates and asked that town officials look to other sources to fund the increased costs. Water rates are too high, he noted.

Police Sgt. Joseph Deignan – spoke in support of the town funding the Quinn Bill. He noted officers are struggling to pay education costs and mortgages. He spoke against a drastic reduction of the work forces as well. He stated that it is disturbing

to hear of the State's fiscal forecasts and is compelled to voice concerns now. Restore what is fair to the officers, he asked.

Police Officer Charles Dupuis/union president – stated that this is a big issue among officers who are disturbed by the lack of support by the State. He indicated that other towns are picking up the slack on this issue, even without a contractual obligation to do so.

Firefighter Steven Iggoe/union president – noted that minimum manning is set to be cut to 16 by July 1<sup>st</sup>. He stated that police and fire are essential services and that they are doing more with less. He asked that the Council scrutinize the town's budget line by line and look to put off some Capital Improvement projects rather than make more cuts to public safety.

The Chair read the budget statement (attached).

## **7. REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE AND FINANCE:**

- a) Public hearing and vote on a proposed Order establishing Water and Sewer Rates and Charges for Fiscal Year 2010. The Manager provided a brief overview of the rates. Mr. Christopher Woodcock was available to answer questions from Councilors. The Chair opened up the hearing to the public. There being no comments, the hearing was closed. It was noted by Mr. Woodcock that a typical increase was \$5.00 per month.

Councilor Hecht asked Mr. Woodcock to explain the use of federal monies. Mr. Woodcock indicated that federal funds are available for capital construction projects only and not to offset rate increases.

Councilor Sideris asked if retained earnings can be used to help ease rate increases. Mr. Woodcock stated that stimulus monies can be requested for this purpose, if they are available. He deferred to Mr. Mee for more explanation.

Public Works Superintendent, Gerald S. Mee, Jr., stated that they are currently using MWRA monies in the amount of \$684,000 for Cottage Street along the railroad bed and will use an additional \$700,000 in next year's budget for water and sewer lines. He noted that no stimulus monies have been approved for Watertown so far.

Councilor Corbett asked why federal funds would not provide great relief in rates. Mr. Woodcock replied that if federal monies come in there is an option to take money from the reserve funds in the hopes you get that money. It could be done in a round about way, but you cannot directly use federal monies to offset rates.

Councilor Kounelis asked Mr. Woodcock to explain how multifamily home rates fell into place. Mr. Woodcock explained that two and three family homes are treated and billed at the same rates as individual condominium units.

Councilor Kounelis indicated she had a sidebar conversation with other Councilors regarding calculating water and sewer rates for multi-family homes. Councilor Kounelis stated she understands that Mr. Woodcock works with many communities and may not recall all the particulars, but the Watertown Town Council did not vote to treat multi-family homes the same as individual condominiums.

Councilor Devaney noted that laws in Arlington allow residents to deduct rates from their taxes. Perhaps Watertown can adopt a similar plan, or look into it.

Councilor Piccirilli moved to adopt the proposed water and sewer rates, seconded by Councilor Hecht and adopted by a roll call vote of 8 for and 1 against, with Councilor Devaney voting no.

- b) Action on the Fiscal Year 2010 Budget and Related Matters. The Manager provided an overview of 5 budget amendments (attached). The budget, with the amendments, totaled \$94,808,413.

Mr. Tracy read each line item of the proposed budget. It was noted that those line items not “passed” on, are automatically adopted.

‘Passed’ budget items were: Police and Fire; passed on by Councilor Devaney.  
School was passed on by Councilor Hecht.

Councilor Sideris moved to adopt the budget, excluding the passed on line items; Fire, Police and Education budget, seconded by Councilor Falkoff and adopted by unanimous roll call vote.

Councilor Devaney talking on the police and fire budget noted that she is worried that positions will be cut in these public safety departments. She also noted her concern with the Quinn Bill, indicating that she has identified the Stabilization Fund as a possible source of monies.

Councilor Devaney used her Charter Privilege to Table the remaining budget items in order to allow the Manager to come back with a proposal.

Councilor Hecht noted that he also wants the Town to address these problems. He indicated that the Town needs to look long term though; as many moving pieces are

making it difficult to address problems now. We are not even certain of our revenues for FY 2010, noting that the Governor has a budget in front of him which he may amend or veto and it is unclear what will happen in each state of the process. Even when a state budget is adopted, the revenues may be off again resulting in midyear 9C cuts again. Councilor Hecht stated that many departments have needs and we have to figure out the short term and long term needs and asked everyone to work together and have patience.

The Chair stated that this has been Tabled and an additional meeting will be posted. The Chair stated that he will post a meeting for June 30<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 pm.

The Town Manager indicated that he will not be making any recommendations with respect to using monies from the Stabilization Fund.

The Chair noted that he is obligated to honor Councilor Devaney's Charter Privilege.

Councilor Sideris moved to request that the Manager or designee continue discussions with the three unions to come to a resolution, seconded by Councilor Falkoff and adopted by voice vote.

The Chair recognized School Committee Chairman, Anthony Paolillo who noted the catastrophic school budget reduction of \$419,000 which will cause additional 7-8 layoffs. He indicated that this deficit cannot be absorbed by the School's budget. The Chair recognized School Business Administrator, Ms. Allie Altman who provided a brief explanation of Circuit Breaker monies which have been reduced drastically.

Councilor Hecht, who passed on the School Budget, noted that, again, he does not want to see cuts to the schools as he has two children in the school system; but suggested the Council wait and not move \$154,000 to the school budget. Councilor Hecht suggested that the monies be moved to Council Reserve.

The Chair used his Charter Privilege to Table the Education/School budget.

Councilor Sideris suggested moving the \$154,000 out of the budget while we await additional meetings on the budget.

The Chair withdrew his Charter Privilege and noted that Mr. Paolillo has indicated that they are looking toward to Teacher's Union to offer some concessions.

Councilor Sideris moved to transfer \$154,000 from the School budget to Council Reserve, seconded by Councilor Hecht and adopted by voice vote.

Councilor Sideris asked for a point of clarification to determine what is needed with respect to a vote as part of this procedure. The Manager suggested a vote on a 6<sup>th</sup> amendment.

Councilor Hecht made a motion for a 6<sup>th</sup> amendment to the budget by moving \$154,000 into Council Reserve, seconded by Councilor Falkoff and adopted by voice vote.

The Chair called for a brief recess.

Councilor Sideris moved to approve the School Budget of \$32,773,708, seconded by Councilor Falkoff and adopted by unanimous roll call vote.

Councilor Falkoff moved to approve the General Fund/Other Financial Sources as read by Town Auditor, seconded by Councilor Sideris and adopted by unanimous roll call vote.

The Town Auditor read the Water and Enterprise Fund Budget line item. There being no pass on this budget, it was adopted automatically.

The Town Auditor read the last item; Utilization of Retained Earning for Water and Sewer. Councilor Sideris moved to adopt the budget as read by the Auditor, seconded by Councilor Falkoff and adopted by unanimous roll call vote.

## **8. COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

- a) Joint Committee on Economic Development and Planning and Public Works report on Coolidge Square Improvement – Jonathan Hecht and Susan G. Falkoff, Chairs. Councilor Hecht read the Committee report (attached). Councilor Falkoff moved to accept the report, seconded by Councilor Kounelis and adopted by voice vote.
- b) Committee on Public Works report on traffic calming, cemetery expansion, betterment policy and fees for business recycling – Susan G. Falkoff, Chair. Councilor Piccirilli read the Committee report (attached). Councilor Falkoff moved to accept the report, seconded by Councilor Sideris and adopted by voice vote.
- c) Committee on Public Safety report and action on the re-appointment of Mr. John Bartley to the Traffic Commission – Mark S. Sideris Chair. Councilor Sideris stated that the committee met earlier this evening to interview Mr. John Bartley, Sr. for reappointment to the Traffic Commission. Following an informative interview, the Committee unanimously recommended his reappointment to the full Council. Councilor Sideris moved the reappoint of Mr. Bartley to the Traffic Commission, seconded by Councilor Devaney and adopted by voice vote.

- d) Committee on Human Services report and action on the re-appointment of Ms. E. Joyce Munger to the Housing Authority – John J. Lawn, Jr., Chair. Councilor Lawn stated that the committee met earlier this evening to interview Ms. E. Joyce Munger for reappointment to the Housing Authority. Following an extensive interview, Mr. Lawn indicated that the Committee unanimously voted to recommend her reappointment to the full Council. Councilor Lawn moved the reappointment of Ms. E. Joyce Munger to the Housing Authority, seconded by Councilor Devaney and adopted by voice vote.
- e) Ad Hoc Committee on Charitable Funds update – Mark S. Sideris, Chair. Councilor Sideris thanked the committee members for their hard work in developing the grant awards for 2009. Councilor Sideris reviewed the list of awards (attached). Councilor Sideris stated that an Emergency Fund Grant process was developed this year due to State budget cuts to certain non profit organizations (attached). Councilor Hecht moved to accept the Committee's report, seconded by Councilor Falkoff.

Councilor Falkoff noted that she will recuse herself from voting on the Watertown Citizens for Environmental Safety committee as she sits on the board of that organization.

Councilor Sideris moved to approve the applications for awards as recommended by the Ad Hoc Committee, excluding the WCES, seconded Councilor Devaney and adopted by voice vote.

Councilor Sideris moved to approve the award to the WCES, seconded by Councilor Devaney and adopted by voice vote. For the record, Councilor Falkoff recused herself from this vote.

Councilor Sideris read and explained the Emergency grant/policy for organizations that fall under the Town's umbrella and receive State grants. Councilor Sideris indicated that the Council will be updated on August 14<sup>th</sup>.

Councilor Devaney moved to approve the Emergency grant/policy, seconded by Councilor Falkoff and adopted by voice vote.

The Chair thanked the Committee for all their hard work.

## **9. INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION FROM TOWN OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES:**

Informational Presentation on designating the former site of the Haartz-Mason Rubber Manufacturing Company under Chapter 43D as a Priority Development Site. The Chair recognized Mr. Steve Magoon, Director of Community Development and Planning who indicated that he is proposing to designate the former site of the Haartz-Mason Rubber Manufacturing Company (270 Pleasant Street/parcel #219 6B 0 and parcel # 217 30/corner of Pleasant Street and Howard Street) as the second Priority Development Site for Watertown.

MOTION: Councilor Falkoff moved to approve the request, seconded by Councilor Devaney and adopted by unanimous voice vote.

#### 10. MOTIONS, ORDERS AND RESOLUTIONS:

a) Resolution authorizing the establishment of a Revolving Fund for the Commander's Mansion activity during Fiscal Year 2010. Mr. Magoon provided a brief overview of the Resolution. Councilor Sideris moved the matter, seconded by Councilor Falkoff and adopted by voice vote.

b) Motion to refer to Rules and Ordinances subcommittee a proposed Ordinance regarding Council ratification of department heads appointed by the Manager – Marilyn M. Petitto Devaney. Councilor Devaney provided background and history on the agenda item. Councilor Devaney read the 2001 Ballot Question and the proposed Ordinance. She noted that it would be rare that an appointment would be voted against; it is a matter of checks and balances. Councilor Devaney moved the referral, seconded by Councilor Hecht for discussion purposes only. The Chair stated that the Question would be referred to Committee for discussion and recommendation. Councilor Devaney noted that she requested the referral of a proposed Ordinance.

Councilor Hecht stated that he hopes the Council does not approve the referral of this matter, noting that it is not a good idea for the Town Council to interfere with the Manager's choices and politicize the appointment process. The voters approved the measure in 2001 that provided a choice to the Town Council. The Council voted not to choose to interfere in the appointment process. Councilor Hecht indicated that the Town Council did exactly what voters asked that they do in 2001.

The Chair noted that he views the matter slightly different in that he voted yes on the Charter Committee's recommendation that allowed the Council to consider it. He noted that he supported it then and supports it now.

Upon a roll call vote, the referral was defeated by a vote of 2 for and 7 against.

**11. PRESIDENT’S REPORT – none noted.**

**12. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE TOWN MANAGER**

a) Request for Confirmation of appointments to the Stormwater Advisory Committee. Councilor Sideris moved to refer the appointment to the Committee of Public Works, seconded by Councilor Piccirilli and adopted by voice vote.

b) Request for Confirmation of reappointment to the Board of Assessors. Councilor Sideris moved to refer the reappointment to the Committee on Personnel, seconded by Councilor Piccirilli and adopted by voice vote.

**13. REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION**

Councilor Kounelis requested an update on the former Wells Avenue Municipal Parking lot.

Councilor Kounelis requested clarification on the Elm Street paving project, as it relates to wetlands area.

Councilor Kounelis referenced a presentation on Channel 25 News about the “Walking School Bus” and the possible availability of federal monies for sidewalk improvements along routes. She has contacted Mr. Steve Magoon and would appreciate follow-up.

**14. ANNOUNCEMENTS – none noted.**

**15. PUBLIC FORUM**

William Gildea, Firefighter and Local 1347 member – requested funds for safe fire staffing. He noted that he would like to continue discussions next week to talk about new regulations.

**16. ADJOURNMENT** – There being no further business to come before the Town Council, Councilor Sideris moved to adjourn at 11:10 pm, seconded by Councilor Falkoff and adopted by unanimous roll call vote.



I hereby certify that at a regular meeting of the Town Council for which a quorum was present, the above minutes were adopted on August 11, 2009 as amended.

Clyde L. Younger, Council President